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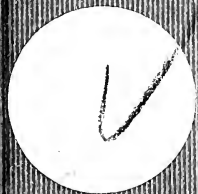
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1921

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POEMS OF
THE FOUR SEAS

JOSHUA HENRY JONES





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FOUR SEAS

POEMS OF THE FOUR SEAS

BY
JOSHUA HENRY JONES



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CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE ROADWAY	3
THE FOUR SEAS ARE BROTHERS	4
FAY TIME ON THE MOOR	5
THE TRIAL OF CHRIST	6
SOLACE	11
GATHERING DRIFTWOOD	12
THE YEARS OF YOUTH	14
LAUREL'S EYES	15
TO NEW ENGLAND	16
MISSIONARIES	17
A LITTLE WHITE HEARSE	18
AFTERWARD	19
ONE BY ONE	20
GOING HOME TO REST	21
TO A TINY HAND	22
CONSOLATION	23
A WISH	25
CHLOE'S LAMENT	26
WELCOME HOME	27
CHEER UP, LITTLE LOUISE	28
WHEN THE SAP COMMENCES RUNNING	30
OH, FADED FLOWER	31
I SAW YOU	32
DESTINY	33
QUESTING	34
TRAVELING	35
REMARK	36

CONTENTS — *Continued*

	PAGE
REFLECTION	36
TO O. M. J.	37
EVENING THOUGHTS	38
WHAT THE VIOLET HEARD	42
TO V— A—	43
LINES TO A PICTURE	44
WHEN THE TIDE GOES OUT	46
WALKING HOME WITH MARY	47
PROMISES	48
THE EVENING STAR	49
THE FATES	50
BROTHERS	51

FOUR SEAS

FOUR SEAS

THE ROADWAY

There are hill roads and dale roads,
And roads that bind and twist;
Some wide roads and cramped roads
Which many souls have missed.
There are blind roads and night roads
That lead to where we fall.
The long road's a hard road
But the best road after all.

Some good roads, some bad roads
Are roads of dust and grime;
Some rest roads and toil roads,
Then some that lead to crime.
The best road's the west road
Which beckons with quiet call.
The straight road, though hard road,
Is the best road after all.

There's a love road and a hate road;
And this last road trails to hell.
There's a cool road; a clean road
That leads by friendship's well.
But the best road is the west road
That calls us one and all.
'Tis a bright road—a right road
And — the one road after all.

FOUR SEAS

THE FOUR SEAS ARE BROTHERS

The four seas are brothers.

Thus the age old legend runs.
And the kinship shows
In each wind that blows
From the poles to tropic suns.

The four seas are brothers
To the folk who dwell ashore;
For the tide that sweeps
Over shoals and deeps
Is the same in sigh or roar.

The four seas are brothers
Whether North, East, South or West.
For their fountain head
Is the common bed
Where the bones of wreckage rest.

The four seas are brothers.
And ne'er shall be more parts.
And a man is a man
Despite pride or ban,
Matters not from whence he starts.

FOUR SEAS

FAY TIME ON THE MOOR

When the harvest moon is spraying
 Stubbled fields with silvered dew;
When the night wind cool is playing
 With the willow and the yew,
When the leaves lisp songs entrancing
 Echo-voiced from valley's floor
Then the elfin folk are dancing,
 And 'tis fay time on the moor.

Leaping where the shades are deepest;
 Racing where the moonbeams fall;
Tumbling where the bluffs are steepest
 There's wild revelry for all.
All the night birds hear their whispers
 Sky and dell is magic floor,
Where they chatter, laugh or lisper
 During fay time on the moor.

When the night is still and calmest,
 And dull mortal earth doth sleep;
Where the katydid's the psalmist
 There the fairy faces peep.
Harvest moon its silver sprinkling,
 O'er the valley's rolling floor;
Those who listen soon hear tinkling,
 Feet of fairies on the moor.

THE TRIAL OF CHRIST

The great Sanhedrin sat in state
Grim jurors, pawns of grimmer fate.
Their robèd splendor richly shown
Gave proof of power, each his own.
The ablest of their kind were there;
Though guides of justice — worldly fair —.
Gray-visaged men of vast renown
Discoursing wisdom, sagely grown,
Sat side by side with potentate;
With mitred priest and magistrate.
Through high-arched, fluted corridors
A motly crowd surged from the doors;
A curious mingled, awe-bound crowd
Whose whispered mouthings rumbled loud,
From wall to wall and dome to dome
Till wafted to each city home.
Long ere the session had begun
One fact each mind did fairly stun;
From street to street, from lip to lip
The fated news began to slip;
Old mothers in the market place,
And toddling maids with lisping grace,
Paused 'midst their toils to ponder on
That truth the air each bore upon;
Across the yards the gossips ran,
A-thrilled to tell whate'er each can

FOUR SEAS

Of that, to them, eventful day
That would all earthly nations sway;
“ They’re trying Christ! They’re trying Christ!
The Nazarene whose head is priced.”
And down the ages comes the cry
Which ever comes and ne’er will die;
Until the human heart has learned
The lamp of truth though lowly burned
Will rise with purifying flame
And cause all ills to hide in shame.
Thus as the word was passed along
The news was intoned like a song.
Straight to the portals from each throat
The cry was borne in grief and gloat:
“ They’re trying Christ, the Nazarene,
Him who hath all our sinning seen.”
Those godly ones whom love had saved
Wept ’midst their prayers while others raved.
All knew that wronged would be the Just.
For who could in such manhood trust?
Where prejudice and pride hold sway
The truth can have but briefest stay.
At last there came a word that thrilled
Those loyal hearts whom love had filled:
“ Make way for Christ! He comes this way!
The Christ is being tried this day.”
And down the centuries the cry
Peals from a conscience stricken sky,
“ Make way for Christ! He comes this way!
Heed ye whom greeds have led astray.”

FOUR SEAS

Then through the throngs 'midst which he passed
Came cheers and groans and hisses fast.
Till silence gripped each human jaw
At sight of God before man's law;
Weak puny men who failed to see
Divinity that set them free.
They in their ignorance blaspheme
That one who moved to act in dream
Gave life and by that living taught
The noblest lesson truth has sought.
He stood alone while in his face
Was shown benignest love and grace.
"Make way for Christ! — the rabble's shout —
"Make way for Christ!" Hearts echo out.
And while his soul is filled with pain
They clear a path, but lean and crane
Their necks that they might freely see
The man of God who'd make them free.
Straight up the temple steps he goes
To shoulder all of human woes;
Nor pauses till he stands before
The Pilate who in mind is sore
To know that he his Christ must try;
God who is Master — earth and sky.
Now in the judgement hall they stood,
The Pilate and the man of good.
The charges made, the questions asked;
The venom bold accusers masked;
Still, Pilate judged Christ without fault,
And would foul persecution halt.

FOUR SEAS

But they were bent on having blood
From him who 'gainst extortions stood,
And all the hosts of people stirred
With love's new doctrine which they heard.
They feared the God of Truth and Right
Would shear them of their power and might.
Christ stood before the judgement bar
And named for Pilate, kingdoms far
More valued than the wealth of men,
As true today as true 'twas then.
Thus Pilate bending from his throne
Ruled he'd an irksome duty done
When he announced with mien austere
Those words betokening his fear:
"I know no law by which to try
This most just man." "No, No," they cry.
"We'll crucify the Christ and rid
Ourselves of one whose teachings bid
The poor throw off the yoke of class
For kingdoms that will come to pass,
In which the right and truth prevail,
Where every grasp of self will fail;
Who stirreth up, those whom we feel
Beneath us, to unholy zeal,
And makes a mockery of laws
That have for ages won applause."
With Christ delivered to their hands
They marched with blaring trumpet bands
To that deserted, lonely hill
Where custom gave them right to kill;

FOUR SEAS

And there upon a cross, made bold
To slay the man who truth them told.
And from that hill comes down the years
Mid battle clashings, groans and tears:
“ Make way for Christ! He comes this way! ”
Heart's echoes shout the cry today.
“ Make way for Christ! Away! Away!
Ah ye of earth turn not away.
Why crucify by wrongs and greeds
The one who stands above all creeds?
All who have hearts behold the way
That points for earth a newer day.

FOUR SEAS

SOLACE

Shadows are climbing over the hill,
And where they lengthen earth becomes still;
Soothed to its slumber — lulled to repose —
By whispered zephyr kissing a rose.

Home thoughts are teeming, soothing the soul—
Still grow the surgings where tempests roll.
Daylight is ending — quiet — serene —
O'er all heart longings draping a screen.

Where are the triumphs won thro' the day?
Only their memories dimmingly stay.
Some of them cheering — some full of gloom
Clinging — regretful — drifting to doom.

Only the solacing comforting thought
Ghosts of vain moments, how eagerly caught.
As I look backward o'er sun-blistered road
That I have lightened some other one's load.

Shadows are climbing ending the day,
Leaving a trailing — this is life's way.
Soon I will slumber — sink to repose —
Freed of all worries — couched next yon rose.

FOUR SEAS

GATHERING DRIFTWOOD

Gathering driftwood down by the sea,
Driftwood that's tossed about under the lea;
Flotsam — the sport of each incoming wave,
Plucked as it comes from a spume-covered grave;
Dried by the blist'ring of Time's summer sun,
Whirled out of brine where foam eddies are spun;
Wreckage — storm-ripped — from some proud sailing
 ship,
Bark that has ended its last thrilling trip,
Now nought but driftwood that's caught from the sea—
Driftwood that's gathered up — coming to me.

Gathering driftwood down by the sea,
Thoughts from life's ocean come floating to me.
Many a bark that starts breasting the wave
Splinters to flotsam with tears for its grave;
Tossed on Eternity's sand dunes at last,
Gathered as flame food out of the past,
Brightens, a beacon, ere ship falls apart
Flickers out courage to some failing heart.
Though 'tis but driftwood out of the sea,
Tossed up by trouble's waves — out of life's sea.

Gathering driftwood down by the sea,
Echoes of broken hearts come up to me.
Battered and tossed by the waves of no hope,
Stagnating souls who in fog of doubt grope;

FOUR SEAS

Rended asunder by winds of ill will,
Crushed 'gainst the rocks where rude evils all spill; —
Come from Eternity — come with a groan —
Come with a dolorous, cavernous moan;
Tenderly gathered in sympathy's arms —
Driftwood remaining — but driftwood that warms.

FOUR SEAS

THE YEARS OF YOUTH

Oh, give me back the years of youth!
Those days of faith undaunted,
When life knew nothing save of truth —
The years no sorrow haunted;
When friends we knew
Were real and true,
And ne'er false values flaunted.

Oh, give me back the years of youth!
That like swift rushing river
Too quickly flowed for any ruth
Yet seemed to glide forever;
When heart was strong,
Filled with glad song
That prompted each endeavor.

Oh, give me back the years of youth!
When courage marched with beauty;
Nor feared to bear the shield of sooth —
When right waged wars for duty.
Those days though gone
Return anon
And cheat death of his booty.

FOUR SEAS

LAUREL'S EYES

When Laurel's laughing wide blue eyes
 Turned smilingly on me,
The world forgot its pains and sighs
 In gladsomeness set free.
Promethean thongs that heart enchained
 Where soul-dark ravens fed,
All fell away while sprays that pained
 Left waves of love instead.

When Laurel's tender deep blue eyes
 Lift smilingly to me,
No orb there is that lights the skies
 But hides its gleam to flee.
Go tell the world life never dies;
 Hope rides eternal — free —
When Laurel's loving deep blue eyes
 Lift tenderly to me.

FOUR SEAS

TO NEW ENGLAND

I love you, old New England!
From 'Roostock down to the Sound
Thy rude, rough headlands, shores and vales
To me are sacred ground:
Where heroes fought
And freedom bought:
And truth is guide to thought.

I love you, fair New England!
From border line to the sea.
I treasure every snow-kissed hill;
They're God-built shrines to me:
Where bards have sung
In world-loved tongue,
Where right her mantle's hung.

I love you, fond New England!
From Long Lake down to the Sound!
Thy bosom cradles noble names
Whom lasting mem'ry's bound.
Where sabres clashed;
War's thunders crashed;
Where hopes are never dashed.

FOUR SEAS

God keep you, loved New England!
From 'Roostook down to the Sound;
Always in van of cause that's right
May you be ever found.
Firm Beacon be,
Light to life's sea
Thou land of liberty!

MISSIONARIES

They found a heathen on an isle across the sea.
The isle was fair and full of riches too.
They sent one holy man the heathen's soul to free —
The mission man took truth beyond the blue.

The mission man soon called on friends for help.
Aid came to him — a mighty battleship —
They took the island's wealth of gold and kelp
To pay the gospel cruiser's hostile trip.

The missionary's duties now are at an end.
He did his work completely — did it well.
The heathen's now a shackled slave to vice—and penned.
They took his home — and sent his soul to hell.

FOUR SEAS

A LITTLE WHITE HEARSE

A little white hearse
At somebody's door —
And some cottage or mansion
Is saddened and poor.

A little white hearse
In somebody's street —
And stilled is the patter
Of two little feet.

Ah, little white hearse
Ah, why did you call?
And why should you covet
This jewel of all?

Oh, little white hearse
Though heart you have pained;
And earth's lost a cherub,
God's heaven has one gained.

FOUR SEAS

AFTERWARD

After the earthquake stillness reigns;

Following storm is peace.

After your losses come your gains —

And dreams that hearts release.

After the evil comes the good

Whate'er the road men trod.

After our sins we wear the hood

When conscience talks with God.

Following hatred then comes love;

After our grief come smiles.

And if we face to skies above

We see naught but life's worthwhiles.

Straight is the way that trails the turn;

After the frost — the fire.

Hope that has overturned sorrow's urn

Will surely the soul inspire.

After we've wounded a heart we grieve;

What we receive — we give.

After we punish we then relieve —

After we die — we live.

After we fail we struggle on;

After we fall we rise,

Sure that we'll see when the night has gone —

God's sun in the morning skies.

FOUR SEAS

ONE BY ONE

One by one the days are going.

One by one the moments flee.

Like a stream that's ever flowing;

Flowing to Eternity.

One by one our tasks we're ending.

One by one we sigh and sleep;

Lashed by fate's decree unbending

Balked ambitions make us weep.

One by one life's miles we're tracing,

Sometimes halting lest we fall:

One by one time's impress tracing

Till we answer toil's last call.

One by one heart seeds we're planting

Whether soil be rich or poor.

Good deeds growing, Heaven's will granting,

Will enfertile all earth's moor.

One by one are blessings given

With our ills, to teach us life

Gives us naught if we've not striven

To plant love in fields of strife.

One by one the days are growing.

One by one the moments flee.

And they bear us scarcely knowing

Swiftly to eternity.

FOUR SEAS

GOING HOME TO REST

When I was a lad, when the earth ne'er was sad,
From my window ere daylight was born,
Forsaken by sleep, back from dreams that were deep
I'd come called by heralds of morn.
As the sky tinted pale beyond earth's outer rail
And then changed to a yellowish chrome
I'd see the stars blink and then silently sink
Into light and go twinkling off home.

Then the grass by the door was with dew silvered o'er.
'Twas a fairyland trove to behold,
Till the sun with his rays recolored the grays
And each blade seemed to drip molten gold.
Then I chuckled in glee that the fairies for me
Had provided such magical sight.
Till the sun came o'er hills and soon sipped up the rills
With his thirsty and harsh cruel light.

But the thought brought me cheer though the day became
drear,
That the stars and the dew on the grass,
Were but guards from the sky while we slumbering lie,
Where the light of the ages will pass;
Who when work hours are done they depart one by one
To the land of the fairy and gnome—
And just like the stars when death lowers the bars
I shall silently steal away home.

FOUR SEAS

TO A TINY HAND

A soft yet pulsing bit of flesh and bone;
So dainty that slight pressure would it crush,
And yet 'tis strong enough to lead me on
Safe thro' all paths where brooding dangers push.

A tiny hand — placed trustingly in mine
To guide two toddling, stumbling feet aright.
Who's guide along our way thro' night and shine?
I lead and yet I follow soul of white.

A tiny hand! What trust in me is placed!
What blind unerring faith in me is shown!
How can I e'er be false when I am faced
With such a trust this hand puts in mine own.

A tiny hand — 'tis mine to lead along
The worldly paths whereon our footsteps trod.
I lead? Ah no, tho' I admit I'm strong
That hand leads me and links my soul with God.

Who has not thrilled at touch of baby hand
And thereat willed to lead a better life?
Who has not joined the host from magic land
And dreamed of trust and faith less strife?

FOUR SEAS

CONSOLATION

There's always a sun somewhere in the sky
No matter how hard it rains.
Joy has an echo for every heart's sigh
And solaces all our pains.

There's always a wee bit of hope in the soul
Despite all the gloom that shows;
And never do storm clouds over us roll
But a fair wind finally blows.

There's always a blessing a-trailing each curse
That low bows the head in grief.
Life always balances better and worse;
The long journeys average the brief.

Always we'll find there's some love in the heart,
While Time sweetens bitterest hate,
And swings fortune's circle each new day to start,
So why not be patient and wait?

Today we are living; our song we intone
Then depart; yield to others our place.
The door betwixt death and birth's only a stone
On which a few markings we trace.

FOUR SEAS

Yet if such impressions as we leave behind
Can aid those who follow our tread,
What tho' we've passed on? Those still coming will
find
We're living each day tho' we're dead.

Let's walk in the sunshine along with the gloom
And face life as heroes face death.
Go boldly to duties whate'er be our doom
Till summoned by Him who gives breath.

FOUR SEAS

A WISH

When your joys are of the sweetest
And your heart is light and free;
When your griefs are skimming fleetest,
Love, one moment think of me.

I'd not ask you to remember
Me when life is dull and drear;
When your hopes are but an ember
From a cold and vanished year;

Sorrow's far too bleak a burden
To retain in mem'ry's hall.
Friendship has no greater guerdon
Than to happiness recall.

So, when roses scent the twilight
Air with ling'ring dew damp breath,
Please remember me as eye-bright
Faith remembers until death.

FOUR SEAS

CHLOE'S LAMENT

The turtle dove is moaning for
Its mate from yonder tree;
“ I wonder why my errant love
Comes never back to me.”
Its cooing plaint makes sad my heart
And dulls my breast with woe.
For who can fill with gladsome thrill
Souls that great sorrow know?

The sighing fir is whispering
To every lazing breeze
That sweeps along o'er turquoise sky,
“ Love feels but never sees.”
Eyes sometimes weep; joys can't all keep,
Clouds drift and come again.
Love that's unmindful of its hurts
Will lasting love remain.

Ah, turtle dove, thou mournest for
Thy mate who's flown away,
While he, unmindful of his troth
On some far bough doth sway.
My love too's careless of his oath.
He's left me grieved — alone.
Where once his lips laid soft caress
Mind grief has placed its stone.

FOUR SEAS

WELCOME HOME

Welcome home! Ah what words sweeter
Can there come to cheer the soul!
Welcome home! The pulse beats fleeter
As we near the sunset's goal.

Hills behind are tinted golden
While there beckon from the gloam,
Arms that with'ring ne'er grow olden
But bid us fond welcome home.

Sweetest music ever wafted
On the air or o'er the foam,
Are the words that love has drafted
When the heart says, welcome home!

Tenderness and pent up yearning
Follow loved ones who may roam,
Till their steps with heart are turning
Back to hear sweet, welcome home!

FOUR SEAS

CHEER UP, LITTLE LOUISE

Today may be dark, or be cold, or be drear.

Cheer up, little Louise.

With nothing but trouble in offing or near,

Cheer up, Little Louise.

As long as a warm heart beats in the breast;

So long as the sunset presages rest,

What comes tomorrow is ever the best,

Cheer up, little Louise.

Love never leaves noble souls in despair,

Cheer up, little Louise.

A smile always blots out the trace of a tear

Cheer up, little Louise.

So long as a song echoes sweet in the soul,

As long as good friendship is heart's fairest goal

Will happiness bring us its comforting stole,

Cheer up, little Louise.

On the moss verdant bank of the swift Edisto,

Cheer up, little Louise.

We plighted our troth, you and I, long ago.

Cheer up, little Louise.

The starlight reflected from sky o'er that stream

Was naught to the love light that shed its bright beam

On me as I whispered my heart's gift (sweet theme),

Cheer up, little Louise.

FOUR SEAS

The birds have all feathered and flown from the nest,

Cheer up, little Louise.

And soon you and I will be taking our rest,

Cheer up, little Louise.

There's one little cherub yon sleeping alone

Of him one reminder is left us — a stone,

And mem'ries that sweeter grow till we are gone,

Cheer up, little Louise.

FOUR SEAS

WHEN THE SAP COMMENCES RUNNING

When the sap commences running
In the maple and the pine;
Nature's robes turn green with sunning;
Soft and tender sprout and spine,
There's a verve to all that's living
Filling souls with thoughts divine
When the sap commences giving
In the maple and the pine.

Spring comes prancing o'er the hillside,
Dull gray winter hastes away,
Changing green is every rillside;
Warm-breathed zephyrs romp and play.
Then heart-hopes start skyward running,
Love gives courage every sign
When the sap commences running
In the maple and the pine.

When the shoots are green and tender
On each tree and shrub and vine;
When the grasses long and slender
Leap to greet the warm sunshine
Youth shows bravery, nothing shunning
'Tis no season to repine,
When the sap commences running
In the maple and the pine.

FOUR SEAS

OH, FADED FLOWER

Oh, faded flower!
Oh, vanished hour!
Both useless now and gone.
No fragrance left.
A friend bereft
Sings in regretting tone.

Gone from the earth,
Forsaking mirth,
You mingle with the past;
Where all we love,
Life's treasure trove
Finds resting place at last.

Once breathing sweet,
One's passing fleet,
In mem'ry leaving trace.
Once thou wert fair,
Time's jewel rare
Who can thy value place?

Can there be friends
When loving ends?
Where is the heart's relief?
When soul is bowed
'Neath sorrow's cloud,
Can Memory be brief?

FOUR SEAS

Oh, faded flower!
Oh! vanished hour!
 Could you but come again,
Love would love still
And life's hour fill.
 Heart would forget its pain.

I SAW YOU

I saw you as I passed last night,
 Framed in a sky of gold;
And through the sun's fast paling light
 You seemed a queen of old,
Whose smile was light to all the world
 Against the crowding dark.
And in my soul a song there purled —
 Re-echoed by the lark.

I saw you as I passed last night,
 Your tresses burnished gold,
While in your eyes a happy bright
 Gleam of your friendship told.
And I went singing on my way;
 On, on into the dark.
But in my heart still shone the day,
 And still — still sang the lark.

FOUR SEAS

DESTINY

In endless shifting cycle each life doth ever whirl
Till Time's Eternal ocean absorbs its rush and purl.

We go from birth to slumber; pass through earth's
grinding mill,
Just grains of wheat — thro' crushers — then blown as
fate's winds will.

We come from God at morning and in his daylight burn,
Gasp, sigh and blink till evening, then back to God
return.

.

In endless shifting cycle each life doth ever whirl.
Soon Time's eternal ocean absorbs its rush and swirl.

FOUR SEAS

QUESTING

A bird, a song, — and a leafing shrub
Sprayed with sun-balm from the sky;
Near silver stream whose ripples gleam
And a gray road's running by,
Trailing away where summers play.
Who could resist? Not I.

A book — a friend — and a happy heart
On a beck'ning shady lane,
Where verdant croft is pillow soft;
The roving soul's domain!
Ah, life is sweet where pagan feet
May scamper or remain.

A bird — a song — and a leafing shrub!
Then, vagabond, my thought
Goes jaunting by where echoes sigh
And bees their homes have wrought;
Goes 'neath the blue, a-seeking you
Where airs with love are fraught.

FOUR SEAS

TRAVELING

O'er the trees the sun is sinking,
Daylight's fading — almost gone.
From the dark the stars are twinkling;
Soon my journey will be done.

Stout my courage was at morning,
With my hopes fixed in the sky.
Now, with knowledge that I'm lorning
Every breath's a soul worn sigh.

Travel-stained I am — and weary.
Torn by bramble thorns of hate;
And the hours at times were dreary;
Now I'm near to home-oped gate.

Up the slope that years have measured
Slow and footsore I have trod.
Whate'er good cheer came I treasured
As my blessings sent from God.

Hard I've tried to face each duty
Life has taught me was a task,
Set to give my soul its beauty;
No fate's favor did I ask.

Through the trees the sun is setting
And the day is almost o'er —
Landscape's draped in twilight's netting —
Soon comes night. — Good night! No more.

FOUR SEAS

REMARK

Why hath Dame Nature wrought such freaks
To blight us with foul breath?
Earth's brightest minds she taints and streaks
Nor purifies till death.

REFLECTION

As a reaper mows the yellowed grain
And naught save stubbles there remain
To tell us what fair nature bore;
So death us mortals soon lays low
While only here and there still show
A trace of human deeds — no more,
To mark the path of those who trod
The rugged slopes from earth to God.

FOUR SEAS

TO O. M. J.

Oh friend of mine, what can I say,
When words such weaklings are;
To make less halting this my lay
To friendship's fairest star?
If your eyes mirror out your soul
Then I see hidden there,
As minutes into hours roll,
Gifts rich beyond compare.

Few have the art of knowing when
Life needs a friendly tear;
To drop on gloom its pearl, and then
Give courage where there's fear.
Yet Nature hath thee full endowed
With sympathy supreme.
Oh, may I share it till — head bowed —
I sleep, at last, and dream.

Tho' winds will blow on other days
There'll be no hours like these;
When youth's sun thro' life's summer plays
Love lilts on every breeze.
Were I but just one wish allowed
Before my hour supreme,
I'd ask your friendship, till — head bowed —
I sleep, at last, — and dream.

FOUR SEAS

EVENING THOUGHTS

The sun, which touched the hills with twilight kiss,
Fast draws about the fields his robe of night,
While I trudge on my way lest I shall miss
The path 'long which bright plays the window light.

A vapor mounts toward the stars with westward swing,
Adrift in wraith-like shapes across the ground.
Each seems a human impulse on the wing
To some celestial haven homeward bound.

A childish, plaintive wail comes on the breeze
In duet with a mother's lullaby.
One — fretful, sobbing voice (impatience seeking ease).
One — soothing soft, like love's caressing sigh.

How mem'ry flashes back along the way
To lowly cottage whence at rush of morn,
Home leash did fret me while love sought my stay.
How might I've saved me wound of hedge and thorn!

The noisy barnyard flocks beseech their perch
With many squawk and sputter of complaint;
With flapping wing and gutt'ral sigh they lurch
E'er lapsing into silent night's restraint.

FOUR SEAS

We are but plumèd cocks who strut and crow
Then grumbling fold our wings at close of day.
Or, like the garden buds that swell and grow,
We sprout, develop, ripen and decay.

I look back on the path through travel's woods
Where trace the true and false steps men have made.
Some paid the price yet ne'er received the goods;
But, gained or lost, perforce were satisfied.

Not satisfied perhaps but kenning fate
Whose strict decree had willed this as their mete,
Contentment took life's loss to compensate
And casting down their arms deemed work complete.

Could they have battled with renewing strength
'Gainst every swinging, swaying push of tide,
They would have learned to know the truth at length;
Stout hand at helm, ships will the storms outride.

Too soon for some did end their ruling power.
For some Time's clock ne'er ceased to tick in pain.
The sands for some too soon ran out their hour,
The glass was emptied and upturned again.

How fared those weakling souls benumbed to right?
Who walks with low minds never will be wise;
For hordes of vanities will in pit darkness fight
Since envy hath naught else but cruel eyes.

FOUR SEAS

Who dares be sage nor heeds the fickle breeze,
The swaying, shifting clamor of the crowd,
Will some day find he's worlds to give him ease
While heads of empires at his feet are bowed.

To tread the highways where God's noble walk
We need no weighty load of troublous pelf;
To stand unharmed while round it evils stalk
A virtue needs no other guard but self.

Than join the mob that screeching demons are
Nor hurl a challenge at life's ills that cry,
Far better 'tis to stand alone at honor's bar
And strive to master or to bravely die.

Tho' robust throat may with the loudest howl,
He cannot lead who ne'er has known restraint.
Tho' pseudo penitence affect to wear the cowl
The surplice does not always hide a saint.

There is no hour when we are paused and still.
All worlds move in majestic ordered way;
A seething, restless swerve to mighty will
Through cycles, seasons, on through night and day.

We think of world as just our little sphere
And preen ourselves with pompousness and pride.
Ten thousand other worlds wot not we're here
Tho' through a vast expanse of Universe we glide.

FOUR SEAS

We are but silhouettes of souls that play
Where many long gone noonday suns have shown.
We crawl about Time's moulds for one brief day.
At night we silent vanish and are gone.

The sands that sweep o'er life's eternal plain
Are scarce disturbed so lightly do we dance.
Sometimes the game is such we'd e'er remain
But night entombs us in our final manse.

So much we gather on the path of life
From reading milestones, both the new and old;
From glimpsing wrecks of other days and strife
Ere Time has wrapped them in oblivion's mantle fold.

God matches men to fit with each new need.
He gives a voice to raise 'gainst every wrong.
He shapes a hero ever when heroic deed
Has need of champion with heart that's strong.

So, matters not how far off course we drift,
In storm true reckoning's regained by star.
Not always do we win though race we swift;
Not by what speed we run, but ye, how far.

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The sun has touched the hills with twilight kiss
And drawn about the fields his robe of night.
I shall not falter lest the way I miss.
The lamp of hope must ne'er be dim but bright.

FOUR SEAS

WHAT THE VIOLET HEARD

A violet waked in its winter bed
'Neath coverlet of snow.
O-o-oh! it shivered then tucked its head
As it heard the north wind blow —
O-o-oh! but it's cold!

Soon April's smiles drove the snow away
And the earth was warm again.
When the robins sang their joyous lay
Sighed the violet to the rain,
A-a-ah, earth's delight!

Her heart was glad when she saw the sun
As the South wind gently blew.
Soon a bud unfurled — a perfumed one —
To a wind-lisped, "I love you,
Oh sweet spring bloom."

Then a youth passed by and the bud espied
'Twas his gift to a maid he knew.
Guess what the violet heard when she sighed
As he whispered of faith true.
'Twas, "I love you."

FOUR SEAS

TO V— A—

A nightingale with a heavy heart
Sat mute in treetop high.
His soul was sad — he'd lost his art
Till he heard sweet violet's sigh.
Her perfumed breath gave him content
For he knew that fragrance rare
Was meant in tenderness for him
Though worlds in it might share.

He lifted up his soul in song;
The night sky felt the thrill,
And paused in rapture — lingered long
On each full-throated trill.
And as with violet and with bird
So 'tis, my friend, with thee.
Thy tender way and sympathy
Doth make what song's in me.

FOUR SEAS

LINES TO A PICTURE

She whose image thou dost bear,
Likeness of my friend so fair,
With me grew from childhood's year
To the age and form you wear.
She and I once playmates were
And, tho' time some scenes may blur
Yet I treasure as sublime
Mem'ries of that happy time,
Long ago, long ago.

Years ago our lives were rift;
Fate, relentless, cruel, swift,
Made us on and onward drift.
Yet no lot could from me lift
That bright scene on mem'ry's wall
Which seems fairest of them all.
In which, laughing or in tears,
We went tripping through the years,
She and I; she and I.

She, perhaps, may never know
All my fortunes, joy and woe.
Should she not, e'en be it so —
To my grave with me 'twill go,

FOUR SEAS

That I love her and adore
Her, my idol, evermore.
Till death yields me to my dream?
This my secret, sacred theme
 Evermore, evermore.

Image of my friend, so true,
Tho' I talk alone to you,
Yet our hearts those times renew;
And along life's path we strew
Flowers, faded, yet they bring
Fancies that thro' years still cling.
As I climb life's rocky slope,
They shall cheer me, bid me hope —
 Ever hope. Ever hope.

FOUR SEAS

WHEN THE TIDE GOES OUT

When the tide goes out from the shore and me
With its sad repeated sigh,
It tells of graves of ships and men,
Those whose bones deep resting lie;
Stout barks — brave men — who ventured out
Where the spume and white caps play;
Who dared to sail in calm and gale
And who scorned the sheltered bay.

When the tide goes out it carries hope
For the sailor's safe return,
To the home and heart in a sure retreat
Where the love-bright beacons burn.
Yet hopes are dashed and ships are brashed.
For the sea is never still.
And some who go on the tide's outflow
Come back — some never will.

When the tide goes out from the shore — leaves me
Alone with its doleful sigh,
The thought takes form that a sloop I guide
Over life's waves low and high.
So my sails I'll trim, let my lights not dim
As we breast the spume and foam.
May my bark's keel make white path in its wake
That may guide some kin craft home.

FOUR SEAS

WALKING HOME WITH MARY

We left the singing school that night
Myself — my heart — and Mary.
The whole world seemed a palace bright
Built by some moon-made fairy.
We trudged across the fallow field,
Myself — my hopes — and Mary.
She wouldn't talk — my soul appealed —
My tongue was quite contrary.

We reached the stile by Adam's brook,
When I, to help her over,
Reached out — her hand in mine I took —
The air was sweet with clover.
'Twas such a wee small dainty hand
From wrist to tip of finger,
I swear it never had been planned
That mine should o'er it linger.

Perhaps I held it much too long.
I cannot quite remember.
In truth but for the catbird's song
I'd say 'twas in September.
And as she was about to trip
As light as any fairy,
O'er the last step there was a slip
And — in my arms fell Mary.

FOUR SEAS

The moon looked from behind a cloud
And there I was — with Mary,
With my heart thumping quick and loud
I 'ad palsy temporary.
I couldn't let the lady fall
Though tempted to be chary.
There's nothing more I can recall —
'Cept that — I married Mary.

PROMISES

Someone made a promise
When promises were true,
And skies were filled with sunshine.
Now, was that someone you?

Someone made a promise
And vowed it ne'er to rue.
But then the fields were golden
And all the sky was blue.

The rainbow is a promise
Yet rainbows all soon fade.
So who can keep unbroken
The vow of youth or maid?

FOUR SEAS

THE EVENING STAR

There's a bright star gleaming in the evening sky
Where the sunbeams tint the slope;
And it sends a word from its haven high —
Twinkling message spelling hope.

There's a fair star shimm'ring in the western sky,
With a cheering, warming light,
That portends a shifting in conditions nigh
When all wrongs will bow to right.

There's a lone star hanging in the sunset sky.
It the treetops sails above
And it glimmers warmer as we mortals sigh.
To sad heart it speaks of love.

There's a bright star swinging in the west warm sky.
In the path that worlds have trod.
And it fills the souls that o'er troubles cry
Till they lift their eyes to God.

FOUR SEAS

THE FATES

Clotho sits and spins a thread,
 Silken, soft and fine;
Thus life starts the years to tread —
 Over down and spine.

Atropos the weaving does
 And, as is her mood,
Life takes happiness or woe;
 Evil shape or good.

Lachesis bends near the wheel
 Cruel, — without tears,
Till, when life doth glory feel
 Then she plies her shears.

FOUR SEAS

BROTHERS

They bind his feet; they thong his hands
With hard hemp rope and iron bands.
They scourge his back in ghoulish glee;
And bleed his flesh; -- men, mark ye -- free.
They still his groans with fiendish shout,
Where flesh streams red they ply the knout.
Thus sons of men feed lust to kill
And yet, Oh God! They're brothers still.

They build a pyre of torch and flame
While Justice weeps in deepest shame.
E'en Death in pity bows his head,
Yet 'midst these men no prayer is said.
They gather up charred flesh and bone --
Mementos -- boasting brave deed done.
They sip of gore their souls to fill;
Drink deep of blood their hands did spill.

Go tell the world what men have done
Who prate of God and yet have none;
Think of themselves as wholly good,
Blaspheme the name of brotherhood;
Who hearken not as brothers cry
For brother's chance to live and die.
To keep a demon's murder tryst
They'd rend the sepulcher of Christ.

FOUR SEAS

LITTLE

Work a little, play a little,
Little time we may.
Laugh a little, cry a little,
Life can't all be gay.

Hope a little, grope a little,
Pathway flat or steep;
Sing a little, groan a little,
Soon we'll fall asleep.

Love a little, hate but little
Lest by hate we fall.
Lift each neighbor's load a little,
Great deeds grow from small.

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